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CrossReach – Executive Summary

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CrossReach has delivered specialist treatment for perinatal mental health needs in Edinburgh for 27 years and in Glasgow for 10 years, developing an experienced and highly qualified bank of counselling staff. Despite geographic expansion across the central belt, it is recognised that demand for counselling has grown exponentially since the service opened and as it stands, only people in the local area of Edinburgh/Lothian and Glasgow can access the service.

CrossReach Confidential Connections (CCC) aims to develop an innovative digital online counselling/psychotherapy solution that can support people experiencing peri-mental health difficulties and has the potential to navigate the identified barriers of geography, time and social stigma. CCC is proposed as a solution to meet this market demand and increase counselling service provision by providing a remote, accessible service available across a Scotland-wide geographic area to anyone who thinks they might need it. In keeping with the current model of care, clients would be able to self-refer (or could be referred by a health professional) and would be eligible for treatment during pregnancy up to two years after birth. It is not anticipated that the CCC model would replace current service delivery; rather it would be an addition to the suite of services offered. It is proposed that CCC could reach a much broader scope of the population: reaching remote and isolated areas and creating opportunities for access where no provision is available.

Following a scoping study, a series of Experience Labs were designed to work together with end-users to gather insights, explore common themes and consider the potential role of digital within this context. Through the use of design tools, the development and validation of concepts and innovative prototypes were tested with a view to creating digital recommendations for a counselling support mechanism that could be made widely available via digital means.